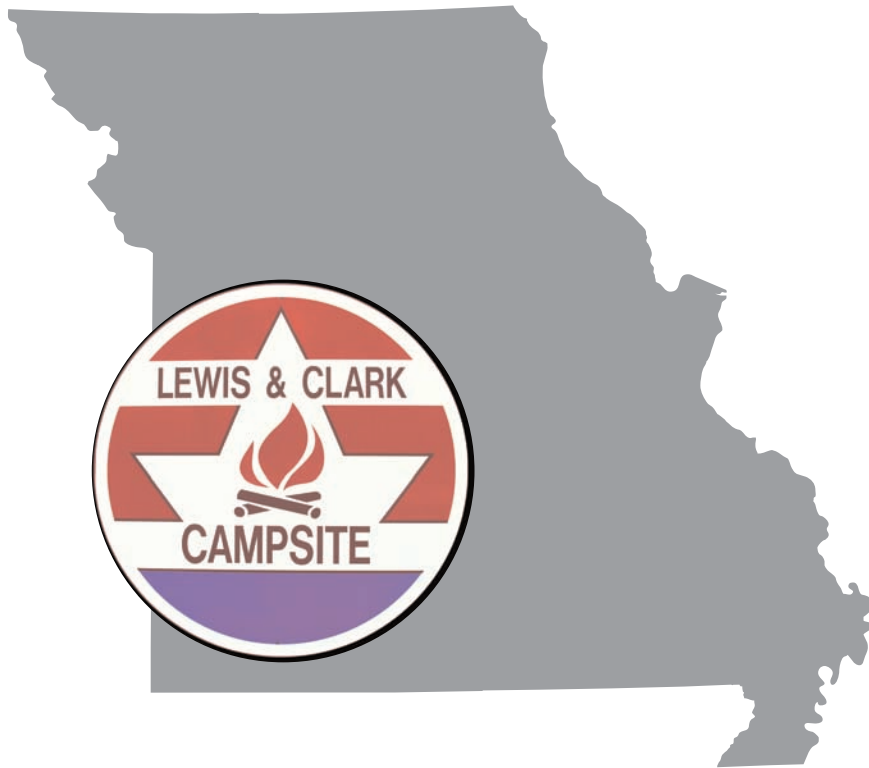


# REMEMBERING THE CORPS OF DISCOVERY:

Missouri's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee  
1966 - 1976



“We had been long since given out by the people  
of the U. S. generally and almost forgotten.”

- Capt. William Clark, Sept. 17, 1806

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When William Clark entered John McClallen's words in his journal on Sept. 7, 1806, he was both right and wrong – wrong in the near time, but prophetically correct about the coming decades and century. He was probably pleased at the immediate reaction the Lewis and Clark Expedition's return received upon their entry into a succession of towns and cities across the country, beginning with St. Charles, and St. Louis (where a banquet provided 18 toasts to the expedition and its captains).

In the longer run, the historical fate of the Corps of Discovery seemed to be whimsically determined, as if cursed by bad luck and ineptitude: the failure to get the official account of the journey into publication in a timely manner, Meriwether Lewis' descent into alcoholism and suicide, and Clark's financial problems and later sharp defeat in the race for the first governorship of Missouri as a state. As pointed out by historian William E. Foley, by the time of Clark's death in 1837, he had become better known for his territorial administration and superintending of Indian affairs than for his earlier role in exploring the West.<sup>1</sup>

Fame is indeed fleeting. By the time Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau (Sacajawea's son "Pomp") died in 1866, his obituary said only of the woman that Clark had acknowledged with gratitude, "He was born in the country of the Crow Indians—his father being a Canadian Frenchman, and his mother a half breed of the Crow tribe."<sup>2</sup> In 1877, Missouri historian and newspaperman William F. Switzler, in his history section of *The Commonwealth of Missouri*, devoted only a brief, three-page chapter to western exploration. Although he credited Lewis and Clark with proving that the Louisiana Purchase was a good value for the price paid, he made particular praise of the timely publication of the "exceedingly interesting" notes, maps, and charts of Zebulon Pike.<sup>3</sup> Of course, when Switzler wrote that in 1877, Reuben Gold Thwaites had yet to launch the rediscovery of the Corps of Discovery.

The aptly titled 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis celebrated the glory of manifest destiny and President Thomas Jefferson's canny bargain. The commemoration was about the purchase of the Louisiana Territory and the exploration of it virtually ignored. Few, if any, Lewis and Clark souvenirs were available and the only exhibit dealing with the expedition was apparently a small feature of the Oregon pavilion.<sup>4</sup> The only significant observation of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the expedition in Missouri was a private one – the family of William Clark created a new memorial over his gravesite in Bellfontaine Cemetery, at its own expense.

Although the expedition had been all but forgotten in Missouri and ignored at St. Louis' Louisiana Purchase Exposition, there was a conscious interest in it in the high plains states and the Pacific Northwest. In those states, Euro-American history nearly began with Lewis and Clark

and an appreciation of the Corps of Discovery remained alive and well. Exhibits concerning the expedition were a feature of the 1905 Pacific Exposition in Portland and numerous individuals continued to call for a more fitting commemoration of the saga. Just as the Oregon Trail movement had its Ezra Meek, who traversed it numerous times by oxen wagon, automobile and even open cockpit airplane to promote awareness, Lewis and Clark had their adherents. Olin Wheeler and Lewis Freeman traveled the western segments of the route with the same consciousness raising idea in mind.<sup>5</sup>

Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of long distance hiking trails as recreational resources had taken root in both the East – the Appalachian Trail – and in the West – the Pacific Crest Trail. In the 1920s, a new phenomenon began to drive the concept of the long distance trail as both recreation and economic boon – tourism and the automobile had arrived. The idea of touring by automobile added a new dimension to the idea of commemorating the Corps of Discovery, a trail route of thousands of miles could be possible and it could be accessible to a much wider audience than just hikers.

Exactly when the idea of creating a public trail along the route of the expedition was given expression for the very first time is difficult to say. The idea of commemorating the Lewis and Clark route was likely a hope and dream of many individuals, but as with most visionary ideas, it needed a champion to take up the cause. J. N. “Ding” Darling, an influential newspaperman in Iowa, became that individual. His first concept was apparently modest, a bi-state project for Iowa and Nebraska to create a Lewis and Clark commemorative corridor along the Missouri River boundary between the two states. As an outdoorsman, he was as interested in the possibilities of wildlife refuge development in the corridor as he was in historical interpretation. His ambitions widened with public acceptance, and he began to think in terms of a national trail that would trace the entire route of the Corps of Discovery.<sup>6</sup>

In 1948, National Park Service planners had proposed a “Lewis and Clark Tourway” involving a major segment of the route, from St. Louis, Mo., to Three Forks, Mont. During the 1950s, western interest in this remained keen. The centennial of Oregon statehood and the sesquicentennial of the expedition added momentum to the movement. In 1961, Darling formally sounded the charge, calling for the direct establishment by the National Park Service of a Lewis and Clark national historic trail from St. Louis to Fort Clatsop in Oregon. Darling envisioned “a recreational ribbon” stretching halfway across the continent from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, and used his considerable influence with the national press, sportsmen and

historians to promote the idea. His untimely death in 1962 denied him the opportunity to see the outcome.<sup>7</sup>

Darling's many friends and supporters soon formed a non-profit foundation to carry on his several projects, including the Lewis and Clark trail. In 1962, in Omaha, and again in 1963 in Portland, the Darling Foundation sponsored "Lewis and Clark Conventions" to bring together all interested stakeholders in the proposed national trail. William E. Towell, director of the Missouri Conservation Commission, personally represented Missouri Gov. John M. Dalton at these meetings.<sup>8</sup> These conventions, with their widespread public and private participation, including National Park Service representatives, came to the attention of Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, aided no doubt by a favorable Congressional resolution. In 1963, Udall ordered the federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to begin a study for the feasibility of a national Lewis and Clark Trail, including suggested routing and noting resources of significance.<sup>9</sup>

The decade of the 1960s had seen a public groundswell of interest in environmental and outdoor recreational issues. Such landmark legislation as the Wilderness Act (1964), the Land and Water Conservation Act (1965), and the Historic Preservation Act (1966) were proposed and successfully enacted. On this rising tide also came 1964's P. L. 88-630, establishing a Lewis and Clark Trail Commission to study and make recommendations concerning the establishment of a national commemorative trail. Darling Foundation President Sherry Fisher was to head the commission. For the next five years, the commission would study the issue, making common cause with the states and private organizations, and submit a final – favorable – report prior to its mandated sunset in 1969.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the work of the commission and the trail feasibility study by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation would proceed simultaneously, dovetailing their efforts with each other, and with the states.

In 1965, draft sections of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation report dealing with each state were being circulated to the Missouri River states for comment. In Missouri, there was a generally positive response, underlain by a certain wariness, as the draft was reviewed by various state agencies. In an April 28, 1965, letter from Lee C. Fine, director of the Missouri State Park Board, to Conservation Commission Director William Towell, Fine said, "The report is fine. I wondered just who is supposed to operate and maintain the public use areas to be built by the Corps of Engineers? ... I wonder if any of the local committees that may have agreed to do this realize the costs involved?"<sup>11</sup> In a later response, after reviewing the bureau's "Proposal for Development," Towell observed: "As this idea becomes more of a reality we will all probably become deeply involved."<sup>12</sup> The two directors were concerned about the operations of their

already seriously under-funded agencies. (The Design for Conservation Tax and the parks-and-soils sales tax were still years in the future.)

The law establishing the national Lewis and Clark Trail Commission stipulated that the membership would include an official representative of each state. The commission itself requested the governors of the 11 states affected to appoint a state level Lewis and Clark committee to interface with the commission, making and submitting recommendations to the commission for developing the segment of the trail within each committee's state.

Missouri Gov. Warren E. Hearnes named Joseph Jaeger, the executive secretary of the State Inter-agency Council on Outdoor Recreation, to be the Missouri representative on the new Lewis and Clark Commission. Jaeger was a logical choice since his position already involved the coordination of the federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's grant activity in Missouri. Jaeger, a former director of the Missouri state park system with an active interest in historical matters, was also a personal friend of Hearnes. (Jaeger, who had led the park system from 1955 until 1964, would become director again following the sudden and unexpected death of Lee C. Fine in 1966.)

In the same Sept. 21, 1965, press release, Gov. Hearnes also announced the appointment of the members of the state committee. Lee C. Fine was to serve as *ad hoc* chairman until the committee could meet and elect its own officers. In addition to Jaeger, Fine and Towell, other appointments to the original committee included Sen. John Downs; Rep. Kermit Glover; James L. Miller, publisher of the Washington *Missourian* newspaper; James Kearns, Jr., a member of the State Highway Commission; Robert A. Brown, Sr., chairman of the Conservation Federation of Missouri; Howard Cowden, of the Agriculture Hall of Fame; G. Edward "Gus" Budde, a public relations specialist; and Carl Chapman, Ph.D., director of archaeological activities at the University of Missouri. As members retired from the committee over the years, Hearnes continued the practice of appointing the influential and the knowledgeable. Lt. Gov. William Morris; retired U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Col. E. P. Streck; Milton Perry of the Truman Library; Edwynne Murphy, Carl Noren and Henry Elmendorf among others, all became valued members of the committee. Miller, Streck, Morris and Murphy all served terms as chairmen.

Obviously, a considerable amount of thought had gone into the selection of the committee members. The committee was well balanced toward accomplishing its mission. With the directors of the two major landholding state agencies, a public relations professional, a newspaper publisher, a member of the state highway commission, a leading academic scholar, a senator and a representative, and the coordinator of the Department of Interior's activities in

Missouri, the committee had formidable depth of expertise and public policy influence. The selection process was seemingly well thought out, but a valuable asset apparently had been overlooked.

The first meeting of the committee was on Jan. 10, 1966, in Jefferson City, and the first order of business was the appointment of an honorary chairman. Apparently the governor's staff had been unaware that William Clark had a great-great grandson living in St. Louis. William Clark Adreon, a trail booster with a Lewis and Clark organization of his own, was similarly naive concerning the political aspects of trail development. Only three weeks before the first meeting of the committee, he had written the state historical society to inquire if the society had any Lewis and Clark information that he could send to the new national commission.<sup>13</sup> Director Richard S. Brownlee tactfully informed him that this was being taken care of by a new state committee, the appointments to which had been announced that very morning. Brownlee thought it best that the historical society should provide its Lewis and Clark services to the new committee.<sup>14</sup> (He also clued in Fine and Jaeger by a copy of his letter to Adreon.) In a letter to Fine, committee member Budde informed Fine that he was planning to attend the organizational meeting, and would be bringing along with him Adreon, on the advice of Joe Jaeger.<sup>15</sup> With the committee acknowledging Adreon as honorary chairman, the politically astute Jaeger had quietly defused a potentially embarrassing situation and added a useful member to the committee. Although not a political strength, over the entire life of the committee William Clark Adreon added a valuable note of historical connectivity to the public perception of the committee's activities.<sup>16</sup>

The early meetings of the committee were filled with a palpable sense of optimism and eagerness. Chapman particularly was anxious to get moving – Lewis and Clark was a subject in which he'd been long interested. Chapman volunteered to bring historical documentation to the very first meeting; Fine advised against it saying the committee had to get its feet on the ground before launching into details.<sup>17</sup> In the first few meetings, the committee had organized itself with officers (James Miller, chairman; Robert Brown, vice-chairman; Carl Chapman, secretary); persuaded Gov. Hearnes to ask the county courts (administrative bodies) in the 25 Missouri River counties to appoint three-person county committees to assist the state committee with matters in their counties; adopted a committee logo for letterheads, press releases and a newsletter (the designs were contributed by Chapman's wife, Eleanor, a noted amateur artist); and established a liaison relationship with the State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia and the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis. By the end of its first year in existence, the

committee had met six times in various cities up and down the Missouri River, and 23 of the 25 counties along the river had functioning county committees appointed and interacting with the state committee.<sup>18</sup>

As the committee coalesced into a working entity, the members had come to see their mission in terms of four principal functions: to get the highway corridor paralleling the trail through the state signed; to locate the campsites of the expedition and nearby points of interest through the use of committees in the 25 Missouri River counties and the expertise of the University of Missouri and the state's two historical societies; to develop and place a series of historical markers identifying and interpreting the sites located; and, finally, to publish a tour guide for those wishing to follow the Corps of Discovery's route through Missouri. Chairman Miller appointed a variety of subcommittees to find solutions to each of these challenges.<sup>19</sup>

The highway department had made it known that they had neither funds nor much interest in being responsible for marking the parallel highway route of the expedition. With flawless logic, Chairman Miller appointed Kearns, a member of the state highway commission, to head a sub-committee to stimulate highway agency interest in marking the route.<sup>20</sup> Kearns wasted no time in getting the chief of highway department planning, James Turner, together with Chapman to hammer out a route. Progress was rapid, and one year after the committee's founding, one of their principal aims had been accomplished. Kearns announced in January 1967 that the route selected by Chapman and Turner and endorsed by the committee had been accepted by the national commission and the Missouri highway authorities.<sup>21</sup> Further, the highway department had agreed to erect and maintain the route markers. The committee had supported the highway department in securing the appropriation to purchase the signs with the now familiar image of the two explorers, one pointing the way, which had been adopted by the national commission. Jaeger made sure the highway commission and the legislature understood that the committee's support for the appropriation was contingent upon the highway department installing the signs, not merely purchasing them.<sup>22</sup>

Despite a resolution by the committee thanking the highway commission for its excellent cooperation, there is some indication that the professional engineering staff of the highway department resented the political interference into their affairs by the committee. The committee received complaints that deteriorated or damaged route markers were not being promptly replaced. In 1969, the mayors of Kansas City, Mo., and Kansas City, Kan., renamed the Inter-City Viaduct linking their cities "The Lewis and Clark Viaduct," and asked the new state committee chairman, Lt. Gov. William Morris, to dedicate the viaduct. The committee secretary,



Robert Dunkeson, was directed to ascertain the “attitude” of the highway department about putting a route marker on the viaduct for the chairman to unveil. The attitude was not good – Chief Engineer M. J. Snider responded that they did not allow special signing along highways, although they had made exception for the Lewis and Clark markers. “Any organized group of people or political subdivision can name a highway or bridge, but we do not sign the structure or highway according to the name.” Further, the viaduct carried an interstate highway, the signing of which fell outside of the earlier allowance made. He concluded: “I feel certain that our fine Lieutenant-Governor will do an excellent job in dedicating this viaduct without signs...”<sup>23</sup>

The issue of what sites and points of interest to mark with interpretive signs or to include in the trail guide brochure proved to be a large task. The county committees had enthusiastically responded to the state committee’s call. The state committee was soon flooded with suggestions for scores of historic sites and “points of interest” that local interests felt worthy of recognition. Budde had estimated it might take a 32-page brochure to incorporate all the items being considered, a publication far beyond the committee’s means. The labor of collecting the information from the county committees had fallen to Carl Chapman, the bona fide scholar on the state committee. At the Hermann meeting in October 1966, a Sub-Committee on Evaluation of Sites and Points of Interest Along the Lewis and Clark Trail of Missouri was appointed to help Chapman sort through the many suggestions from the counties. Chapman was to be chairman, supported by Miller and Adreon (and later Col. Streck). Richard S. Brownlee, of the State Historical Society of Missouri, and George Brooks, of the Missouri Historical Society, would serve as ex officio members.<sup>24</sup>

The issue to deal with was that not all of the suggestions were of equal Lewis and Clark merit. The committee from Lafayette County, for example, wanted to include St. Paul’s College in Concordia, founded some 80 years after the expedition passed, and 22 miles distant from the Missouri River. Other counties had similar ideas about “points of interest” having little or no connection with Lewis and Clark. After sorting through entries, Chapman presented the sub-committee’s draft recommendations to the state committee at its Jan. 21, 1967, meeting in St. Louis.<sup>25</sup> The sub-committee, apparently facing some criticism of its selections, eventually adopted a formal written guideline about what could not be included in the brochure (these criteria may also have been applied to signing): there were to be no commercial attractions whatsoever; churches, schools, cemeteries, courthouses, statues, parks and many other local committee favorites were excluded, barring any extenuating circumstances related to Lewis and Clark. After these guidelines were accepted by the whole committee, they were rigorously

applied by the sub-committee one last time, and the list then handed over to the public relations firm that had been engaged to prepare the brochure.<sup>26</sup>

Budde had been assigned the chair of the brochure or trail guide committee, assisted by Adreon and Edwynne Murphy. Budde was a natural for this task, being professionally in the public relations business, as well as being the public information officer for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis. The big question facing the brochure sub-committee was not what to put in it, or where the route would go, but how to pay for it. The funds available to the committee were totally inadequate for such an undertaking.

A commercial fundraising and public relations firm was brought on board to deal with this problem. The committee contracted with Robert Stoddard & Associates, Inc. of Jefferson City, to produce and fund the trail guide. The Stoddard proposal was simple – the historic sites and points of interest would be divided geographically into “panels” in the brochure. The county committees would each be responsible for raising local funds to sponsor the panel covering their county. Costs of the publication would be raised in this manner, as well as Stoddard’s fee, thus giving Stoddard incentive to aggressively canvas the local communities. The state committee itself agreed to pay for two panels at \$1,000 each.<sup>27</sup>

In general, this scheme worked very well, although the rigorous screening by the evaluation sub-committee created a few stand-offs. The Clay County committee complained that no sponsors could be found in its area unless the state committee would reconsider including some cherished local shrines – the Jesse James Home and the Jesse James Bank Museum had been excluded as commercial attractions, and the Jesse James grave had failed to pass muster, being in a cemetery.<sup>28</sup> Neither the county committee nor the state committee blinked, and 100,000 copies of “The Lewis and Clark Trail in Missouri” were printed – with no mention of Clay County. Jackson, Platte, Andrew, and Cooper counties were likewise absent in the trail guide for similar reasons, although Kansas City was included.

The trail guide was well received and the 100,000 copies were quickly distributed. For the proposed second edition, Stoddard had a more ambitious plan for funding an even larger and more elaborate trail guide. In addition to the donation scheme, he proposed that his firm would sell commercial advertising space in the brochure. On this point, a serious disagreement arose, both within the state committee and without. Since the sub-committee had rigorously weeded out commercial attractions, letting them in by the back door did not sit well in all quarters. The Boone County committee, for example, threatened to boycott the trail guide completely if it

contained advertising.<sup>29</sup> In the end, the pure history faction won out – the revised second edition of 100,000 copies contained no advertising.

In fact, this dichotomy between commercial and intellectual interest in the trail concept had been an issue from the beginning. The serious history buffs were not willing to allow advertising; the interest of the commercially minded flagged if there was to be no payoff in the end. The original planning maps for the route through the counties had included three Lewis and Clark trails – the expedition route (essentially the Missouri River); a “designated trail;” and a “scenic” or tourism route.<sup>30</sup> Chapman and Turner had had to compromise in selecting the final route to be marked. Other compromises kept the historic trail idea moving ahead, but the issue of a commercial vs. a more cerebral development of the trail remained a concern throughout the life of the committee.<sup>31</sup> Jaeger, always a pragmatist, believed in a necessary balance between financial (i.e., promotional) and intellectual concerns: “There is much work to be done...including the raising of finances, promotional as well as historical preservation. I don’t believe that any of these elements can operate as a separate segment and they must all pull together to succeed.”<sup>32</sup>

Having resolved the issue of what features would be included in the trail guide, the committee also adopted an overall plan for signing the trail points of interest in Missouri. The highway route was to be marked by the highway department, using the standard sign prescribed by the national commission. The committee developed two new signs of its own that would be used to mark the Lewis and Clark campsites along the river. Col. Streck had traveled repeatedly up and down the river using old maps and charts, and the expedition journals, to try to locate the exact location of the expedition campsites. Wherever he determined a precise location for a campsite, it received a round, 30-inch diameter sign. When he thought the location was only proximal to a campsite, or was only a nearby feature of interest, a 24-inch sign was used. These round signs were manufactured at the state prison from recycled 55-gallon steel drums, painted in striking red, white and blue, with a silhouetted campfire, and the date of the camp beneath.

A third type of sign was to be more informational. Also made at the prison, this sign would be the familiar type used by the highway department along roadways for informational signing – rectangular, white painted steel with black border and wording. These signs were to be placed at the option of the county committees. The local groups would apply to the state committee for an interpretive sign, submitting the proposed wording for committee editing and approval. (These signs had room for only 20 to 30 words.) If the state committee approved the sign, it was manufactured at the prison shop, and the local committee was required to pay for it.<sup>33</sup>

Streck worked tirelessly with local groups, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state park superintendents and others in signing over 50 of the campsites along the river, and finding suitable locations for the black and white interpretive signs.

Although the publication of the trail guide and the placement of the campsite markers were major accomplishments, the committee had frustratingly larger ideas. From the beginning, the issue that dogged the committee was the matter of funding – there was never enough money to implement all of the possibilities they saw inherent in developing the trail concept. At its second meeting, the committee had come to the realization that it was exactly that: a committee. Appointed by the governor and serving at his pleasure, but without state agency status, it would be unable to receive state funds. Through Carl Chapman, the University of Missouri agreed to pay for the immediate administrative expenses of the committee and Jaeger pledged that the State Inter-Agency Council for Outdoor Recreation would step in when the university had had enough. These were stopgap measures and a more permanent arrangement was needed. Chairman Miller appointed Joe Jaeger to be a committee of one to see what could be done to remedy the situation. Perhaps the committee could become “... a regular commission with an appropriation for expenses?”<sup>34</sup>

Always reliable in political matters, Jaeger secured the needed executive order from Gov. Hearnes – the committee became officially a state entity on May 24, 1967, housed for administrative purposes within Jaeger’s state park agency.<sup>35</sup> Even better news came in the next state budget cycle – Jaeger’s park system appropriation request before the legislature included funding for the committee: a supplemental (emergency) appropriation of \$1,500, to tide it over until the end of the fiscal year and a new request of \$5,000 for the following year.<sup>36</sup> (These appropriations continued through 1976, the first two years for \$5,000 and later for \$1,000 each year for operating expenses.)

The new state appropriations were sufficient to fund administrative operations and provide expenses for periodic meetings, but fell far short of allowing any more ambitious plans the committee might consider. The issue of funding was discussed at a number of meetings in 1968, and at the May meeting, a financing idea developed by Jaeger and Stoddard was presented to the committee. The idea was that the committee should incorporate a subsidiary not-for-profit foundation. Robert Stoddard and Associates, Inc. would continue its earlier canvasses, only now soliciting memberships (i.e., donations) to the foundation. After expenses had been deducted, Stoddard would retain 20 percent of the money raised and 80 percent would accrue for Lewis

and Clark activities. Stoddard proposed that these funds could be used to produce an enhanced trail brochure, a fourteen-minute color movie of the trail in Missouri, a quarterly newsletter, and finance a marketing campaign to bring out-of-state visitors to see the Missouri segment of the trail.

After sub-committee action, discussion at several committee meetings, and approval at the Sept. 28, 1968, meeting, the Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail Foundation, Inc. became a duly chartered Missouri not-for-profit corporation in March of 1969. The incorporating board consisted of state committee members Edwynne Murphy, William Clark Adreon and Joe Jaeger, who were also the officers: president, vice-president, and treasurer respectively. In the committee meeting minutes, the new not-for-profit organization was variously referred to as “the State Trail Account,” “the Membership Sub-Committee,” and “the Foundation.” Stoddard was already under contract to the membership sub-committee, and was soon on the road selling memberships. An account was opened in a Jefferson City bank in the name of the foundation, in which Stoddard was to deposit the membership solicitations, and from which the foundation board would pay his expenses. An account was opened in a second Jefferson City bank in the name of the Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee. The foundation board (Murphy, Adreon, and Jaeger) could draw checks on the foundation account for deposit in the committee account, upon which the committee could expend the funds on committee projects.

How effective this fundraising device was is hard to determine, or even how much money was raised in total, as it was a complex business and the records are incomplete. Of whatever amount had been raised – it was apparently disappointingly small – the committee made an unknown number of expenditures from it. By the time the arrangement ended in 1972, the residuum in the hands of the Missouri committee consisted of \$55.96 in a checking account and a certificate of deposit for \$1,000. The later written testimony of the Missouri committee, offered at the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation’s St. Louis public hearing on the national trail, included the statement “...the future of a State Committee is dubious. Our experience with subscriptions from the private sector indicates state revenue support is necessary.”<sup>37</sup>

The plan had been iffy at best. The idea of a state entity controlling private funds outside of the appropriations process simply by changing hats gave, at a minimum, the appearance of being an end run around state regulations. The money was fully accessible to the committee, and at committee meetings, the treasurer (Jaeger, for both organizations) reported on the balances in both the state appropriation and in the private bank account. The committee and the foundation were essentially the same thing.

Issues surrounding Stoddard and the membership campaign funds created the only seriously contentious internal issue the committee ever faced. Some members of the committee obviously had misgivings. There was a certain wariness about Stoddard lingering from the earlier advertising issue, and the matter of commercial as opposed to historical interest may have clouded the subject as well. The committee insisted that Stoddard report monthly on his fundraising activity, and at one point, after reviewing his contract and records, he agreed to waive \$3,125 of expenses he had charged to the committee.<sup>38</sup> Arguments over the Stoddard arrangement was frustrating to Jaeger, as treasurer. At one point, concerning a Stoddard matter, Jaeger wrote to the chairman privately suggesting a written ballot on the issue: "Thus, the individual members can stand up and be counted."<sup>39</sup> Two "no" votes and one abstention suggests there was a core of opposition within the committee, either to Stoddard or to the fundraising scheme.

Ironically, a very positive development evolved from this chartered foundation fundraising concept. Despite strong support from the Missouri River states, Congress had declined to extend the mandated sunset of the national Lewis and Clark Commission. Facing its end in 1969, among its other recommendations was that a national association be established to carry on its work. In the summer of 1968, commission chairman Sherry Fisher had appointed a three-man committee of commissioners to look into this possibility: David Ainsworth, Stephen Jackson and Joe Jaeger. Of course, by this time, Jaeger was well along in the development of his own plan for a Missouri foundation.

Exactly when, or how, the idea that the Missouri foundation could become the national foundation envisioned by the federal commission is not clear. But, eight months after the Missouri charter had been granted, Jaeger wrote to Robert Killen (Nebraska state parks division) that, "The aim of the Lewis and Clark Heritage foundation is to preserve the work of the Federal Lewis and Clark Trail Commission... We in Missouri would like to expand the work of the Heritage Foundation, however this will depend upon interest expressed by the other states. I might add that we already have in Missouri over 500 dues paying members..."<sup>40</sup> With a bit of old fashioned states' rights attitude, he made clear that he envisioned the organization being a compact among states: "...we believe that the responsibilities should be among the eleven states concerned with the Trail and not the Federal Government or the 'Ding' Darling Foundation. Do I make myself clear?"<sup>41</sup>

The federal Lewis and Clark Commission met for the last time in mid-May 1970, and in the meanwhile, Gov. Warren Hearnes had written the governors of the other 10 Missouri River states inviting them to participate in a new national Lewis and Clark foundation. Joe Jaeger, as *ad hoc* secretary, wrote to their designees inviting them to a meeting to organize the “new” foundation, in St. Louis, on June 27, 1970. In fact, there was no “new” foundation. The Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail Foundation retained its original Missouri charter and became “national” by the simple expedient of expanding its board to include members from other states.

For its first three years (1969, 1970, early 1971) Murphy, Adreon, and Jaeger remained the only board members (and officers). In its required annual filing with the Missouri Secretary of State, the Feb. 15, 1972, document listed for the first time all non-Missouri officers, except for Jaeger, who remained as treasurer – but, there were more Missouri members than from any other state.<sup>42</sup> (In 1973, Jaeger resigned as treasurer and from the foundation in response to an old issue – the Stoddard contract that had been transferred from the old “membership sub-committee” to the “new” foundation had come under fire by the recently expanded organization.)<sup>43</sup> By 1974, the foundation board had been expanded to 20 persons, and Missouri members no longer held a controlling interest. In 1981, the board voted to legally change the name of the foundation from the Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail Foundation to the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.<sup>44</sup>

In 1972, the election of Republican Christopher S. Bond as governor signaled a change for the Missouri committee. From its inception, the Lewis and Clark Committee had been a Democratic organization, integrated thoroughly into the Hearnes administration, and had gone about its business in a political manner. Many of the initial appointments – Miller, Kearns, Brown, Glover, Downs – were openly and prominently Democrats. Most of the new and replacement appointments were likewise; now all were vulnerable, especially Joe Jaeger. Jaeger, had vied, unsuccessfully, for the party nomination for Secretary of State in the 1964 election and it had been rumored around the capital for months that if Bond won the election for governor, Jaeger would be replaced after 14 years as parks director. At the April 15, 1973, meeting, Streck announced that he had submitted his resignation. Others urged caution, and a motion was made that the committee continue its work as usual, pending any word from the new governor. Jaeger, having left his post as parks director, turned his Lewis and Clark financial records over to the committee secretary, Bob Dunkeson. The committee voted Jaeger a resolution of thanks and presented him with a plaque, in honor of his service to the committee.<sup>45</sup>

Although never in the limelight as chairman, Jaeger, with his political savvy, close connections to the governor and the legislature, and a willingness to utilize park system resources for committee support, had been the driving force in the committee. Despite a certain amount of bravado expressed about continuing, the starch had gone out of the committee. At the previously scheduled meeting in Tarkio in June, only Streck attended to meet with the county committee. Nearly a year later, Dunkeson attempted to summon the committee to a meeting to prepare a committee statement for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation hearing in St. Louis. Only Streck and William Clark Adreon came to meet with him. Although Jaeger did not formally resign from the committee until September 1973, his action at the April meeting essentially ended the old committee. It never met again in full quorum after April 15, 1973.

Ultimately, it made no difference as a much larger issue was at hand. The Omnibus Reorganization Act of 1974 totally restructured Missouri's government. The essential idea of the reorganization act was to prune the number of independent commissions clamoring for the governor's attention. In effect, all commissions ended in their existing format and by a series of executive orders and legislative mandates were either sustained, placed under the policy authority of one of the newly formed cabinet-level departments, or dissolved entirely. The governor remained silent on the matter of the Lewis and Clark Committee and for the next year and a half, the committee was dormant – no actions or meetings took place. In fact, it is questionable whether the committee even existed given the terms of the reorganization act.

As the first director of the new Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the governor chose James L. Wilson, Jaeger's successor as director of the former Missouri State Park Board. Wilson, a former professional athlete and longtime recreation administrator, was both personable and intensely competitive, not inclined to lose ground on any front. He also had wide ranging interests and, with the governor's concurrence, intended to retain the Lewis and Clark connection with his new Department of Natural Resources. It was decided that the committee would be revitalized as an adjunct advisory body to Wilson, as director of the department.

Wilson announced the reorganization of the Lewis and Clark committee and made new appointments. With Lt. Gov. William Phelps serving as chairman, Wilson's new committee had a distinctly Republican aura as strong as the previous committee's had been Democratic. Only two of the old committee members were kept on – William Clark Adreon, whose credentials were his name, and Gus Budde, who had strong connections with the National Park Service and the national Lewis and Clark Foundation. The new committee had two professional historians, Richard Forry, a history professor at Stephens College, and Orval Henderson, director of the



State Historical Survey and Planning Office, a part of the Department of Natural Resources. In the new committee, Forry and Henderson would take up the scholarly role previously looked after by Carl Chapman and Col. Streck.

The first meeting was held on Nov. 14, 1974, with Phelps presiding and Wilson in attendance. No one seems to have thought it odd that the elected lieutenant governor would head a committee that reported to an appointed department head. (However, this had been a concern for the governor. Through intermediaries, Gov. Bond told Wilson he did not wish to make the appointments himself, fearing a fight over Senate confirmation. The governor assured Wilson that he understood the awkwardness of Wilson appointing the lieutenant-governor, but apparently Gov. Bond assuaged Phelps personally about accepting the appointment.)<sup>46</sup> The first order of business was organizational: C. M. “Cap” Bassman, mayor of Hermann, was elected vice-chairman, and William K. Wight (Wilson’s previous assistant and now the new director of the parks division within the Department of Natural Resources) was elected secretary.

The second order of business was more problematic – what was to be the function of the committee? Various members of the staff and members of the previous committee provided summaries of what had already been done by the original committee. Phelps called for ideas for matters the committee should involve itself with in the future. A long list of items was proposed by Phelps (or staff) and from the floor, mostly having to do with events, education and public relations. Phelps requested the members consider the list and come prepared at the next meeting to say which activities they would like to take on as subcommittee assignments.

Henderson eventually steered the committee toward taking a broader interest in historic sites and historic preservation in general. Under his guidance, the committee endorsed and supported several pieces of historic preservation legislation. Forry pushed strongly for educational matters – cooperative programs with local schools and colleges, scholarships and stipends for Lewis and Clark research. The committee as a whole was fascinated with one rather major, if fanciful, idea. It wanted to buy or lease a replica keelboat and have excursions up and down the Missouri River in the national bicentennial summer of 1976.<sup>47</sup> Wilson, ever the energetic activist, exhorted his staff to develop a “thrust” for the committee.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the best efforts of all concerned, the second incarnation of the Lewis and Clark Committee never caught fire. Over the next two years, the committee struggled through six more meetings, but at the Sept. 20, 1976, meeting in St. Louis, it failed to set a time and place for the next meeting. In fact, the committee never met again.

In fairness, there were a number of obstacles in the way. First and foremost, there was the old issue of money. The \$1,000 annual appropriation barely covered the expenses of having meetings, much less affording any grand schemes. An opinion from the assistant attorney general assigned to the Department of Natural Resources informed the committee that any donations it received must be deposited to general revenue and could not be spent directly by the committee.<sup>49</sup> In its only show of bravado, the committee declined to transfer the small balance left from the old committee's membership scheme to general revenue and even deposited a \$500 donation in the old private account. At every suggestion for a fundraising idea, the committee was reminded by the department of the general revenue trap. It quickly abandoned the keelboat idea – it came with a \$50,000 price tag. The committee grew adept at suggesting. It suggested that the highway department replace all the signing, both route marking and interpretive campsite signs. It suggested that the Tourism Commission publish a new and more elaborate Lewis and Clark trail guide. The committee's suggestions fell on deaf ears; other agencies had other priorities for their funds. Without money, the committee was largely limited to giving public relations support to the trail concept. It did find and repair an earlier commercially available Lewis and Clark movie, and made it available for loan to schools.<sup>50</sup>

The members of the new committee became discouragingly aware of the difference between the first committee – housed in an agency, but retaining policy authority over its own actions – and themselves. The new committee, merely advisory to an agency head, with no policy authority of its own, could neither raise funds, spend money, enter into contracts or otherwise engage in trail business other than by advising the department. After only one year of the new committee's existence, even Wilson was discouraged, writing to Bill Wight: "Bill – do we still believe participation on the Lewis and Clark committee worthwhile?"<sup>51</sup> Wilson's intuition about "thrust" had been correct – without its own policy mandate, the committee simply withered away.

Under Wilson and successive directors, the Department of Natural Resources remained interested in the Lewis and Clark Trail. After enactment of Public Law 95-675, the trail became an official project of the National Park Service. Darling's concept of the "recreational ribbon" had become more like a string of pearls – public and private historic sites and recreational areas linked by highways, with overall National Park Service coordination. In this scenario, little need was seen for a state committee. In the second Bond administration, Department of Natural Resources Director Fred Lafser suggested to Dick King, the governor's chief of staff, that since funding for a committee was so difficult (barring any federal money for such a purpose), that

responsibility for any needed Lewis and Clark actions be transferred to the department's Historical Survey and Planning Office, as it already exercised oversight on federal historic preservation matters.<sup>52</sup> Even the state auditor had recommended that the legislature no longer provide financial support for the committee.<sup>53</sup> Gov. Bond agreed, and the department maintained its involvement in Lewis and Clark, but without a committee.

One vestigial remnant of the original trail committee continued to crop up periodically. Auditors, both internal and external, repeatedly discovered the private bank account. Orval Henderson, the last person in the department staff with even a faint claim of being a committee member, had dutifully “rolled over” the certificate of deposit year after year. With interest, the account had grown to nearly \$2,500, and had become an embarrassing biannual audit finding. Auditors noted that two department employees had signature authority over the account (although no checks had been drawn against it for over a decade) and repeatedly suggested that the account be closed and the money transferred to general revenue.<sup>54</sup> Department staff strongly disagreed – the money had accrued from private donations made specifically for Lewis and Clark projects.<sup>55</sup> Director Lafser concurred and agreed to take the moral – if not regulatory – high ground. There was no state committee, the county committees no longer existed, and the local not-for-profit foundation had become national. So a variety of ideas relating to the expedition and the Missouri River were financed from the remaining money.

The private account was at last closed and the small balance transferred to the State Parks Earnings Fund, from which 10,000 copies of the national Lewis and Clark Trail brochure were purchased for distribution in state parks along the river. The Missouri River Society, Inc. received partial funding for a “Year of the River” celebration involving fur trade re-enactors traveling on the river from Fort Osage to St. Charles, giving programs at local schools along the way.<sup>56</sup> The honor of performing the final act of the Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee fell to the parks division archivist, who used the last remaining funds derived from the private account to purchase a set of the then-new Moulton edition of the Lewis and Clark journals for the state parks division's research library.<sup>57</sup>

There was to be an epilogue. By 1990, although the highway route markers were in place and being renewed as needed by the Department of Highways and Transportation, the colorful campsite signs placed under the auspices of the Lewis and Clark Trail Committee had largely disappeared – shot-gunned, defaced, flooded or stolen, not much remained of the once ambitious campsite marking effort of the 1960s. The Department of Natural Resources undertook the replacement of the campsite signs. New signs were ordered from the prison shop and staff at

state parks and state historic sites up and down the river were given the assignment of locating the campsites as noted by Col. Streck many years before. A significant difference in this effort was an attempt to place them more closely to the actual sites, even if the signs were less accessible to tourists. Many were on dirt roads on levees and far off the beaten path. In the 1960s, the signs had been placed largely for the convenience of visitation; some were actually miles from the real location of the camps.

There was to be an ironic outcome resulting from adherence to historical exactness. Accuracy meant that most of the signs were erected nearer the river, on low ground. The all-time record Missouri River flood of 1993 destroyed nearly all traces of the marking program. A 2005 survey of state park personnel stationed near the campsites indicated that of the 56 signs, only a handful had survived. The final irony was that the signs that had escaped had done so because they had been placed upon nearby higher ground due to a campsite location having been totally inaccessible in 1991.<sup>58</sup>

Did the Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee leave a legacy for the future? Decidedly yes. For more than 40 years, the highway route of the trail has remained marked and on the official Missouri State Highway Map. Although the relationship with the highway department begun by the committee had gotten off to a rocky start, by the time of the bicentennial commemoration of the expedition, the Missouri Department of Transportation had become an eager and full partner in the enterprise, with signing more comprehensive than ever before.

Missouri's river cities are her oldest, and were always aware of their history. However, the meetings of the committee up and down the river and the presence of interpretive signing added a new aspect to that history. Communities near the campsite locations were especially made aware that they had a stake in not only their own history, but also a strong tie to the nation's history. Hundreds of local people – as many as 250 at a time – attended the committee meetings held in their towns. They and the scores of men and women who served on the county committees, many still living, were well disposed in 2004 to join in the work of the bigger and better bicentennial commemoration.

Finally, the National Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, which continues to this day to vigorously promote and assist with matters affecting the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, grew out of the Missouri committee. What had begun as a modest scheme to raise funds for trail promotion in Missouri, is now in its 36<sup>th</sup> year, a national organization with 3,500 members scattered across the United States and the world.



In Weston, Mo., in a landscaped plaza, stands one of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission's handsome new interpretive signs – maps and illustrations in full color, with ample and carefully researched text. Mounted proudly beside it is the familiar old red, white, and blue campsite marker, along with a slightly battered and faded black and white interpretive panel from the 1960s. In the end, the Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee had itself become a part of Lewis and Clark lore.

## Notes

All items not otherwise cited are from the files of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Division of State Parks in Jefferson City, Mo.

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<sup>2</sup> "Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau," Auburn Placer Herald, July 7, 1866, quoted in Larry E. Morris, The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers After the Expedition. (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004), 188.

<sup>3</sup> William F. Switzler, The Commonwealth of Missouri: A Centennial Record. Ed. C. R. Barnes. (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1877), 168-170.

<sup>4</sup> Bob Herman, noted St. Louis World's Fair scholar, telephone interview with the author, Feb. 17, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> State Historical Society of Washington, Internet Web page.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> J. N. "Ding" Darling Foundation, Internet Web page.

<sup>8</sup> William E. Towell, letter to Gov. John M. Dalton, Oct. 8, 1963.

<sup>9</sup> Press Release, Department of Interior, Sept. 30, 1965.

<sup>10</sup> "Lewis and Clark Trail, Final Report of the Lewis and Clark Trail Commission," 1969.

<sup>11</sup> Lee C. Fine, letter to William Towell.

<sup>12</sup> William Towell, letter to Lee C. Fine.

<sup>13</sup> William Clark Adreon, letter to Richard S. Brownlee, Dec. 14, 1965.

<sup>14</sup> Richard S. Brownlee, letter to William Clark Adreon, Dec. 22, 1965.

<sup>15</sup> Edward "Gus" Budde, letter to Lee C. Fine, Dec. 30, 1965.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Jaeger, interview by author, Jefferson City, Missouri, May 23, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Lee C. Fine, letter to Carl Chapman, Jan. 4, 1966.

<sup>18</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, various dates.

<sup>19</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, various dates.

<sup>20</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, April 2, 1966

<sup>21</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, Jan. 21, 1967

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Jaeger, interview by author, Jefferson City, Mo., May 23, 2005.

<sup>23</sup> M. J. Snider, letter to Robert Dunkeson, April 15, 1970.

<sup>24</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, Oct. 2, 1966.

<sup>25</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, Jan. 21, 1967.

<sup>26</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, Dec. 2, 1967.

<sup>27</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, Dec. 2, 1967; Jan. 20, 1968.

<sup>28</sup> Jack Wymore, letter to Robert Dunkeson, March 19, 1968.

<sup>29</sup> Virginia Botts, letter to E. P. Streck, Nov. 21, 1968.

<sup>30</sup> Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Columbia, Mo., C-3922, Lewis and Clark Trail Committee of Missouri, Records, 1964-1977.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Forry, interview by author, Oct. 24, 2005.

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Jaeger, letter to Lynn Burris, Sept. 6, 1972.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Dunkeson, letter to E. P. Streck, March 12, 1971; Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee meeting minutes, Jan. 21, 1967.

<sup>34</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, July 30, 1966.

<sup>35</sup> Missouri Secretary of State, State Archives.

<sup>36</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, Jan. 21, 1967.

<sup>37</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, April 29, 1974.

<sup>38</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, May 16, 1970.

<sup>39</sup> Joseph Jaeger, letter to William Morris, July 8, 1970.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Jaeger, letter to Robert Killen, Nov. 19, 1969.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Missouri Secretary of State, Corporate Records

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Jaeger, letter to Lynn Burris, Sept. 6, 1973.

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- <sup>44</sup> Missouri Secretary of State, Corporate Records
- <sup>45</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, April 15, 1973.
- <sup>46</sup> Charlotte Watchinski, handwritten note to James L. Wilson, July 5, 1974.
- <sup>47</sup> Missouri Lewis and Clark Committee, meeting minutes, April 24, 1975.
- <sup>48</sup> James L. Wilson, handwritten note to William K. Wight, undated.
- <sup>49</sup> Andrew Rothschild, memorandum to William K. Wight, April 10, 1975.
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